

AROUND THE HOUSE

A Home of My Own

In June, the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development celebrated National Homeownership Month. We thought it would be great to feature some of our own illustrious Wichita Housing Authority homeowners and have them tell you, our readers what homeownership means to them.



"There's so many wonderful benefits to owning a home! Pride in having your own home, economic benefits, and the equity you build over time to name a few. To be able to say I am a homeowner; this is MY home. I never thought that in my lifetime I would be a homeowner."

Brenda Wathke

(Story Continues on Page 3)

THE FUTURE OF OUR REGIONAL COMMUNITY NEEDS YOUR VOICE!

Visioning Wichita, a strategic planning project, will define the direction of our community for the next 20 years. This is your chance to participate in creating a plan for the Wichita Regional community!! There are six areas of focus for the Visioning Wichita process. They are: **Quality of Life, Education, Private Sector Involvement, Economic Development, Government, and Infrastructure.**

Be one of hundreds of area citizens involved in creating a shared vision. Let your voice be heard today so that your children's voices will be heard tomorrow. All Community Meetings begin at 7 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

August 2

WSC Hughes Metro Center
5015 E. 29th Street

August 3

Wichita Northwest H.S.
1220 N. Tyler Rd, Wichita

August 4

Derby High School
920 N. Rock Rd, Derby

August 5

Allison Middle School
221 S. Seneca, Wichita

August 16

Coleman Middle School
1544 N. Gouverneur, Wichita

August 17

Maize South Middle School
3701 N. Tyler, Wichita

August 18

Ruth Clark Elementary
1800 W. 55th St., Haysville

August 19

Jardine Middle School
3550 Ross Pkwy, Wichita

Milestones



Congratulations to the following Housing Services staff members who recently earned college degrees.

- * Pearl Harmon
- * Shreda Johnson
- * Kathy Pewardy



Vallery Fields, Housing Leasing Specialist and FSS Coordinator was recently honored by the United Way of the Plains. Vallery was one of 160 community volunteers who reviewed 102 programs proposed for funding at 36 local agencies. The group of dedicated volunteers donated more than 2,000 hours of community services over a nine-week process. The generous time given by these volunteers helps to provide benefits for the entire Wichita community.

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

MARY K. VAUGHN



The month of July marks my sixth month anniversary as Director of the Wichita Housing Authority/Housing Services Department, and I must say it's been an exciting experience. One of the biggest challenges has been keeping up with changes that are being proposed by the Federal government, for the way we operate our Public Housing and Section 8 programs. Over the past few months, proposals have been made which would decrease our operating funds for both programs. One of the proposals which was a serious concern, was a plan for the Federal government to stop funding the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. That would have meant losing our FSS workers, Diane Boyd and Vallery Fields. The valuable work they do with FSS clients helping them set and reach goals, would have been lost if this proposal had gone forward. However, we learned just last month that FSS program funding will be continued for at least another year. We immediately prepared an application to continue to fund our two current FSS workers – and we took advantage of the opportunity to apply for funds to add a third position.

As we look forward to having funds available for the FSS staff, we know that it's not just the staff who make this program successful for our Section 8 clients. The staff works closely with the FSS Program Coordinating Committee (PCC) which provides valuable resources and services as well. In addition to providing us with linkages to community services, PCC members have also conducted monthly workshops for our program participants. The Program Coordinating Committee recently participated in a workshop to plan for next year and I facilitated one of the sessions where they developed a new mission statement. Effective immediately, the PCC/FSS mission is as follows.

"To promote self-sufficiency, the Wichita Family Self-Sufficiency program supports families in their efforts to become economically independent"

We are excited about the possibility of having our Family Self-Sufficiency staff on board for another year, and look forward to working with the Program Coordinating Committee to reach the goals of the new mission statement – helping Section 8 clients reach their goals of self-sufficiency.

KANSAS NAHRO SPRING CONFERENCE UPDATE

Inafay Grays-McClellan, a member of the Wichita Housing Authority Board, recently attended the Kansas Chapter National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials 2004 Spring Conference in Manhattan, Kansas. This year's conference was hosted by the Manhattan Housing Authority.

Ms McClellan reports it was a very well-planned event. There were several programs and sessions addressing community development and housing programs. Also a leadership team provided sessions for professional staff, residents and commissioners. Also, there were other sessions about Public Housing and Section 8 rent calculations, with a focus on assets and income disregards.

All in all, Ms. McClellan said that the spring conference was very informative and enlightening. Ms. McClellan did attend the closing award banquet, and said it was good to get together with old acquaintances, while networking with other housing officials.

A Home of My Own

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"Owning a home is wonderful. I love it! I can do what I want without asking. I've always wanted to own my own home. I just didn't think it would be possible due to my poor choices in the past. There's a certain amount of pride in owning your own home. I have my own refrigerator, stove, yard, garage, and patio."

Angie Conway

"The best thing about homeownership is the freedom to make it your home. We are in the process of finishing the basement, adding a family room, another bedroom, and a large pantry with lots of storage space. Our advice? Don't give up! Just because you're poor and need financial help, you can qualify for a home through the Section 8 program"

Marsha & Lyle Flickinger

"I heard about the homeownership program when I went to a Section 8 briefing. I was told that you could use your voucher to pay for your mortgage and own your own home. Imagine paying so little for your dream! I can paint, wallpaper, or decorate how I chose. Best of all, it's mine!!!"

April Randle

CURRENT 2004 HAP PAYMENT SCHEDULE

| <i>Month</i> | <i>Mail Date</i> |
|--------------|--------------------|
| AUGUST | JULY 30, 2004 |
| SEPTEMBER | AUGUST 31, 2004 |
| OCTOBER | SEPTEMBER 28, 2004 |
| NOVEMBER | OCTOBER 29, 2004 |
| DECEMBER | NOVEMBER 30, 2004 |

**Section 8
Landlords
TAKE
NOTE!**

Public Housing News

New Interactive Voice Response System

The Department is pleased with the success of the new Interactive Voice Response System (IVR), which is able to answer many questions for callers from the general public and our clients. It is showing great results in that Section 8 and Public Housing applicants can now go directly into the Department's data system and determine their status on the respective waiting list. The system is also handling many general information calls without the need to wait for a customer service representative.

Currently, we are receiving approximately 2,700 calls a week. Of those calls, 28% are successfully being handled quickly and accurately by using the IVR without the need to hold for a customer service representative. Callers are increasingly using the IVR during evening and weekend hours, which is a good benefit for those unable to call during work hours.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program Available

If you are elderly, 60 and older, or a parent of children under six and not receiving WIC benefits, or you are an expectant mother, and not receiving benefits through the WIC program, and meet the following income guidelines, you may qualify for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program offered by United Methodist Urban Ministry. For further information please call Debbie Derber at 267-0511.

Income Guidelines

| <u>Family</u> | <u>Annual</u> | <u>Monthly</u> |
|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1 | \$12,103 | \$1,008.58 |
| 2 | \$16,237 | \$1,353.08 |
| 3 | \$20,371 | \$1,697.58 |
| 4 | \$24,505 | \$2,042.58 |
| 5 | \$28,639 | \$2,386.58 |
| 6 | \$32,773 | \$2,731.08 |

National Night Out

The "21st Annual National Night Out (NNO), a unique crime and drug prevention event sponsored by the National Association of Town Watch (NATW), has been scheduled for **Tuesday, August 3, 2004**. Find out how you and your community neighbors can be part of the "NIGHT OUT 2004 team." For further information, contact the Wichita Police Department, Community Affairs Division at 268-4101.

Resident Artist



Pam Blanchard, a McLean Manor resident displays her artwork at a local art show. Her work is being shown at the Kansas University Medical School, located at 1010 N. Kansas. Admission is free. The show runs through August 27th.

Family Day– September 27, 2004

Family Day. A Day to celebrate dinner at home with your family. President Bush has proclaimed the 4th Monday in September as "Family Day".

Putting Family First encourages families to join the nation by celebrating and reclaiming the time honored tradition of enjoying a meal and conversation at home. The average meal takes about 30 minutes to prepare and 30 minutes to eat. So what does this one hour a day really mean? Family dinners are the key to have "parent power" according to the National Center of Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University.

As youth get older their schedules seem to get busier, and they enjoy spending more time with their friends. However, eating meals as a family is important not only for young children, but has shown to have positive impacts throughout the teenage years. Depending on their ages, ask your children for ideas to help with family meal time and make "*Family Day 2004*" a regular every day event in your home.

Section 8 Client Convicted and Sentenced To Jail For Committing Housing Fraud

Recently, a former Section 8 client was convicted and sentenced in a federal case for making false statements in order to receive tenant rental assistance. For several years, the client failed to accurately report their total family income, as well as failing to disclose information regarding all family members in the household. As a result, the client was sentenced to five months in jail, and was ordered to pay back more than \$75,000 to the Wichita Housing Authority.

Section 8 clients and public housing residents should be aware that unreported income and making false statements relative to your family household composition are very serious violations of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) tenant rental assistance regulations. Violations of HUD's program regulations are cause for termination, fines or even imprisonment.

Attention Section 8 Clients!!

Changes in the family size, household composition and income must be reported within 14 days of the change to your Housing Leasing Specialist **in writing**. It is important that you notify your Housing Leasing Specialist of such changes as they occur. Due to changes in our procedures we can no longer allow families we serve to "drop off" any information without first contacting your Housing Leasing Specialist. We want to provide you with the very best service possible. We need your help to do so! For more information, please contact the Section 8 Office at 462-3700.

News You Can Use

Celebrate Summer!



**Saturday, July 31, 2004
1:00 - 5:00 PM
2700 NORTH WOODLAND**

**COME ON OUT— BRING YOUR LAWN CHAIRS,
YOUR FAVORITE EATS AND ENJOY SUMMER AT
EVERGREEN PARK *THERE'LL BE MUSIC,
PLENTY OF CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, FAMILY
GAMES, DANCE GROUPS, INFORMATION
BOOTHES, FREE SWIMMING (SWIMSUITS
REQUIRED) AND SO MUCH MORE!***

For more information contact Terri Donzal at
Evergreen Neighborhood City Hall
Telephone Number: 303-8042

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AUTHOR, AUTHOR!!

The Wichita Housing Authority has a famous writer in our midst.

James C. Harwood, a participant in the Section 8 program and a graduate of Wichita State and Kansas State University has written and published a science fiction novel entitled "**HEREafter**". Published in May 2003, this is Mr. Harwood's first novel. For more information about his novel, visit www.iUniverse.com

"A perfect summer day is when the sun is shining, the breeze is blowing, the birds are singing, and the lawn mower is broken."
~James Dent

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HOT FUN IN THE SUMMERTIME !!!

With summer upon us, many people will be enjoying backyard barbecues and picnics. Gas grills are very popular and convenient; however, they can cause serious injury and even death. By following some simple safety tips, barbecuing can be safe and enjoyable!!

- ◆ When lighting the grill light a match or lighter then apply it to the burner
- ◆ Always be aware of windy weather. Wind blowing sparks can catch on dry leaves or brush in the yard.
- ◆ It's a good idea to keep a fire extinguisher within easy reach of backyard barbecue grills.
- ◆ Avoid wearing loose clothing around the grill, such as dangling apron strings and shirttails that can hang over flames and catch on fire.
- ◆ LP gas tanks should be stored in a secure and cool area outdoors.
- ◆ Play it safe!! Don't use grills under decks, in garages, or on roof overhangs.

Happy Grilling!!!

We're on the Web!
[www.wichita.gov/
housing](http://www.wichita.gov/housing)